



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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KILLING SONG BIRDS FEDERAL OFFENSE; WILDLIFE VALUABLE

Shooting robins, bluebirds, catbirds, woodpeckers, and other song and insectivorous birds with BB guns, air rifles, or other weapons is a Federal offense bringing a maximum sentence of \$500 in fines, 6 months in jail, or both, according to officials of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

With summer vacations under way, youngsters are apt to take out the old BB gun or air rifle to do a little pot shooting at song birds in the neighbor's garden or in the nearby woods, officials said, and parents are urged to warn their children not to shoot the feathered creatures.

"Aside from the fact that song birds make a garden or farm more attractive," one official explained, "the birds are economically important."

Many of the birds are beneficial because they eat insects that otherwise would be injurious to plants and crops.

"Birds may be given credit for being one of the greatest controlling factors in limiting the development of insect pests and in preventing many disastrous outbreaks," a food-habits expert declared.

Even the much-maligned starling is economically important. A study of the food-habits of the European starling shows that some 42 percent of its diet consists of insects, nearly half of which are beetles.

Farmers' Bulletins describing the value of song and insectivorous birds have been written by Fish and Wildlife Service ornithologists and are available at 5 cents a copy from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. These include the following:

Food of Some Well-known Birds of Forest, Farm, and Garden (506-F); Common Birds of Southeastern United States in Relation to Agriculture (755-F); Some Common Birds Useful to the Farmer (630-F); and The European Starling in the United States (1571-F).

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